



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Volume 11, Issue 13  
April 03, 2009



# *Constituent Update*

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## **FSIS Strengthens Policies on Imported Food Products**

FSIS is committed to protecting public health through food safety as well as food defense and is taking action to strengthen its efforts with regard to imported food products that contain small amounts of meat, poultry or processed egg product as an ingredient.

Though some products may only contain small amounts of meat, poultry or processed egg product ingredients, they are not exempt from FSIS jurisdiction until the Agency makes that determination. If FSIS determines a product is exempt, the products are then subject to the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

In addition, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) regulates imports to ensure they do not pose a threat to U.S. animal health. Though some products containing small amounts of meat, poultry or processed egg product ingredients may not pose a threat to animal health and would be eligible for an APHIS-issued permit, they are ineligible for entry into the United States if the ingredients were not prepared under equivalent inspection systems and thus are not from an approved source.

While FSIS statutes provide authority to exempt certain foods containing relatively small amounts of meat, poultry or processed egg product ingredients, the statutes condition the exemption on the products not being adulterated; that is, that these ingredients need to have been prepared and passed under FSIS inspection or under a foreign inspection system deemed equivalent by the Agency.

The requirement that the meat or poultry ingredients be from an approved source is a condition that is stated on all permits issued

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## Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

### Philippines

### Japan

### Russia

Complete information can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Export\\_Information/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp).

**FSIS Constituent Update**  
is prepared by the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs Office (CPAO).

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## Import Permits ...

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by APHIS between March 19 and June 22. Importers must be able to provide documented evidence, upon request by FSIS, to support the origin of any meat or poultry ingredient used in the food product identified on the APHIS permit.

After June 22, any new permit application submitted to APHIS will be reviewed by FSIS to ensure that any meat or poultry ingredient comes from an eligible source. The importer must be able to demonstrate to FSIS that the ingredients are from an approved source. If this condition is not met, the imported food will be considered ineligible for importation into U.S. commerce. Ineligible product found in commerce is subject to seizure and destruction.

APHIS is providing a 90-day extension for any permit that expires before June 22. At the end of the 90-day extension, the importer may submit a new application, that complies with the conditions outlined above.

Note that these policies do not apply to food products flavored to resemble meat, poultry or processed egg products if such food products do not actually contain these ingredients. Also, the program does not include products not intended for use as human food, such as pet feed or pharmaceuticals.

For a list of countries eligible to export to the U.S., please visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/countries\\_products\\_eligible\\_for\\_export.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/countries_products_eligible_for_export.pdf). Questions concerning these policies may be directed to FSIS at [permits@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:permits@fsis.usda.gov) or toll free at (888) 287-7194.

## FSIS Seeks Public Comment on Draft Comparative Risk Assessment on *Listeria*

The Agency submitted a notice about its draft comparative risk assessment on *Listeria monocytogenes* (*L. monocytogenes*) for publication to the *Federal Register* to solicit public comments. This assessment compares the risk of listeriosis from consumption of prepackaged ready-to-eat (RTE) deli meat versus RTE deli meat that is sliced and packaged at retail.

FSIS expects the *Federal Register* notice to be issued next week. An advance copy is available on FSIS' Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Risk\\_Assessments/index.asp#RTE](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Risk_Assessments/index.asp#RTE). FSIS will review and evaluate public comments on this draft comparative risk assessment.

Submit written comments within 60 days after the notice is published to the *Federal*

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## FSIS Posts New Podcasts

Tune in and subscribe to podcasts that offer helpful information on the selection, handling and preparation of meat and poultry products to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.



This week, FSIS released podcasts helpful to both consumers and plant owners and operators. Check out these new podcasts on the FSIS Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/news\\_&\\_events/Podcasts/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Podcasts/index.asp).

### Ham

#### Statutory and Regulatory Requirements for Humane Handling, Part 1 of 7

### Slaughter Inspection 101 Fact Sheet

“Slaughter Inspection 101” describes the mission of FSIS, the basics of inspection and the duties performed by FSIS inspectors in meat and poultry slaughter facilities.

Have questions? View details at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Slaughter\\_Inspection\\_101/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Slaughter_Inspection_101/index.asp).

## Risk Assessment ...

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*Register.* Comments can be sent to the Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, FSIS, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Room 2534, South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250. Submissions may also be received through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

All items submitted must reference the Food Safety and Inspection Service and include docket number FSIS-2009-0003. For further information on the risk assessment, contact Dare Akingbade, Office of Public Health Science, at (202) 690-6462 or at [Dare.Akingbade@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Dare.Akingbade@fsis.usda.gov).

## Register for FSIS “How To” Workshops for Small and Very Small Plants

The Agency is hosting a “how to” workshop in Philadelphia to provide practical tools and methods for proper application and compliance for recalls.

ensuring humane handling of livestock and conducting product recalls.

Outreach workshops cover information on Specified Risk Materials (SRMs), developing controls for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, establishing effective sanitation practices, developing food defense plans,

The April 7 workshop will be held at the Holiday Inn Historic District, 400 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. Visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/Outreach\\_Sessions\\_SVS\\_Plants/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp) to register.

## FSIS Offers Podcasts in Spanish

FSIS is introducing a Spanish language Food Safety at Home podcast series. These podcasts are another convenient and innovative way for the Spanish speaking community to learn the four basic steps of the Be Food Safe campaign: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.

Check out this week’s Spanish podcast featuring safe preparation of ham at [www.fsis.usda.gov/En\\_Espanol/Podcasts\\_SP/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/En_Espanol/Podcasts_SP/index.asp).

## Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli* O157:H7

Weekly updates for the Agency's raw beef *E. coli* sampling program are posted to FSIS' Web site.

For comparative 2008 and 2009 results, go to [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground\\_Beef\\_E.Coli\\_Testing\\_Results/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.Coli_Testing_Results/index.asp).

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## FSIS Issues Notices

FSIS issues notices to enhance the Agency's efforts in protecting public health. The following policy updates were issued this week:

- Notice 21-09, *Humane Handling Activities and Documentation in Livestock Slaughter Establishments*
- Notice 22-09, *Follow-Up Sampling of Certain Raw Ground Beef Products after an FSIS Verification Sample Tests Positive for E. coli O157:H7*
- Notice 23-09, *Routine Sampling of Beef Manufacturing Trimmings intended for Use in Ground Beef*
- Notice 24-09, *Child Nutrition Labeled Products*

All notices are available on the FSIS Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations\\_&\\_policies/FSIS\\_notices\\_index/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/FSIS_notices_index/index.asp).

## FSIS Launches New “Ask Karen” Upgrades

FSIS has upgraded “Ask Karen,” the FSIS virtual representative, available 24 hours a day on FSIS' Web site. The tool can answer consumer questions about the prevention of foodborne illness as well as the safe handling, preparation and storage of meat, poultry and egg products from an extensive database of food safety information.

Users will notice a new look with new features. Search results will be displayed in a new tabular format. Users can filter results by topic or product and submit questions if the answer doesn't appear in the knowledge base. To get started, visit [askkaren.gov](http://askkaren.gov).

For more information on “Ask Karen” contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or send e-mail to [mpholine.fsis@usda.gov](mailto:mpholine.fsis@usda.gov).

## Register for Codex Public Meeting on Food Labeling

FSIS and the Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a public meeting to discuss information and receive public comments on agenda items to draft U.S. positions that will be discussed at the 37th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labeling (CCFL) to be held in Calgary, Canada.

The meeting will be held April 7 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Room 107A of the Jamie Whitten Federal Building, 1200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C.

Attendees must pre-register and present photo identification at the door. To pre-register, please send your name, organization, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address to Maria Espinoza at [uscodex@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:uscodex@fsis.usda.gov) or call (202) 205-7760. Individuals may also fax items to (202) 720-3157.

Documents and agenda items related to the 37th Session of CCFL will be available on the Codex Alimentarius Web site at [www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp).